Nurse Leadership:
Promoting the Empowerment of Nurses

1. Introductions

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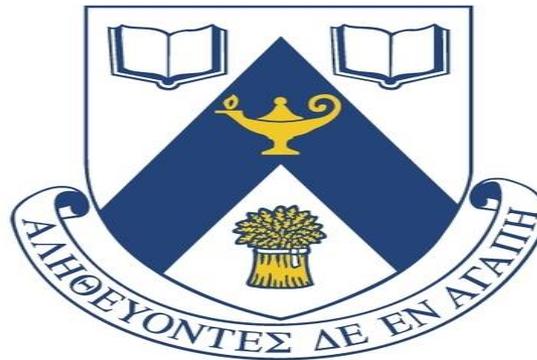
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BRANDON UNIVERSITY

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FAILURE TO TAKE ON A LEADERSHIP ROLE IS NOT AN OPTION

EDNA CADMUS, RN, PHD, NEA-BC, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

The Promotion of Empowerment in Nursing by Nurse Leadership

1.

The benefits of empowerment within the nursing discipline

2.

The concept of power within organizational structures

3.

How empowerment practices by nursing leadership impact the care delivered by nurses working in mental health

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Empowerment Within Organizations

- The transfer or delegation of responsibility an authority from mangers to employees; empowerment is the sharing of power.

- Empowerment also involves the sharing of vision, mission, knowledge, expertise, decision making, and resources necessary for employees to reach organizational goals

M.G. Oberleitner, DNS, RN, APRN, CNS, University of Louisiana

2. Empowering Within the Nursing Discipline

Empowerment within the Nursing Discipline

- Fulton (1997) suggested nurses are an oppressed group in need of liberation

- Historically, nurses have been subjected to horizontal violence and intra-professional disempowerment...created by nurses

Empowerment within the Nursing Discipline

- Studies have confirmed nurses who believe their work environments to be empowering feel more engaged, provide a higher quality of care and yield better patient outcomes (Greco, Laschinger, & Wong, 2006; Laschinger, Wilk, Cho, & Greco, 2009)

- Nurses who feel empowered in their workplace also experience increased job and patient satisfaction with less burnout (Greco et al., 2006; Laschinger, 2008; Laschinger et al., 2009; Smith, Capitulo, Griffin, & Fitzpatrick, 2012)

Empowerment within the Nursing Discipline

- Nurses who feel empowered also report increased civility and trust in their organization (Laschinger, Leiter, Day, Gilin-Oore, & Mackinnon, 2012; Smith et al., 2012)

- Rao (2012) identified that nurses who feel empowered will deviate positively and take risks, practice outside the norms in order to achieve remarkable goals, and produce extraordinary results

3. Power Within Organizational Structures

Power Within Organizational Structures
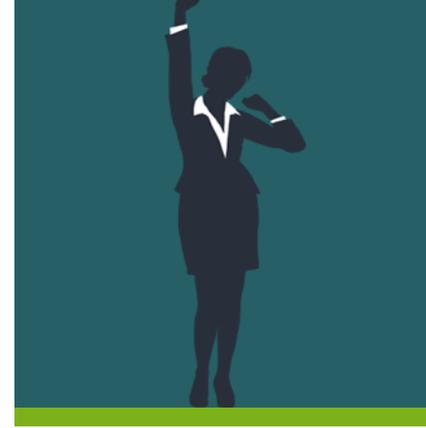
- Power in nursing is often considered a negative phenomena but it is the professional power that nurses have that can motivate the action required for caring (Rao, 2012)

- Nurses have historically experienced outcomes of power in the absence of empowerment
  - Yet, power begets power

Power Within Organizational Structures

- If nurse leaders have access to information and resources, feel supported and challenged, and are given adequate opportunities for career growth, these leaders will in turn empower staff nurses to become more effectual practitioners

  Matthews, Laschinger & Johnstone (2006)

Power Within Organizational Structures

- Perceived empowerment comes with purpose and meaning built into nurses' work (Laschinger, Wong, McMahon, & Kaufman, 1999)
  - Role clarification
  - Opportunities to participate in decision making
  - Access to skill-based learning enhancement and performance improving resource
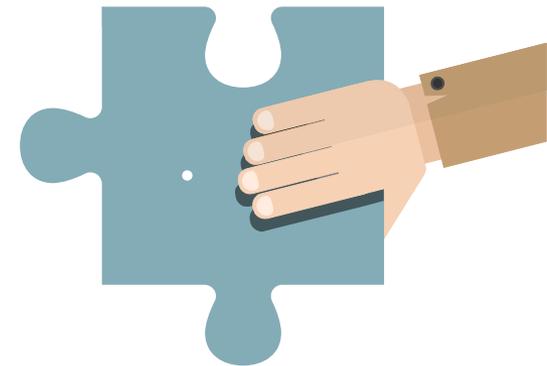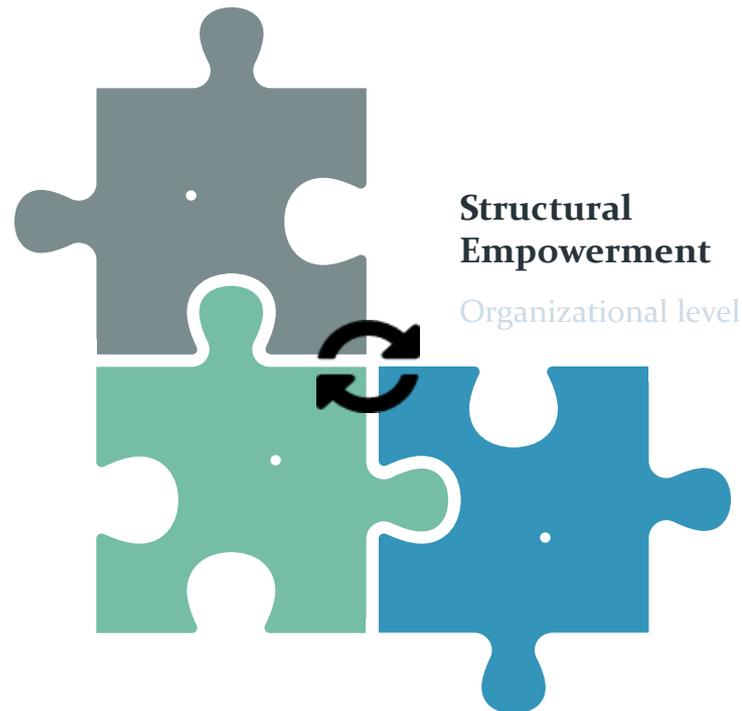 - Support to improve confidence in practicing at the fullest scope

Power Within Organizational Structures

Power at the Level of the Individual:

Leader or manager.

Structural Empowerment

Organizational level

Psychological Empowerment

Individual employee level

Power at the level of the Employee

The ability to get things done.

Rao, 2012

Power Within Organizational Structures

Kanter's Theory of Structural Empowerment (1993)

- The conditions within a work environment that lead to worker empowerment, and allows workers to carry out their duties in a meaningful way
    - Having access to necessary information and resources (e.g., knowledge)
    - Feeling supported
    - Experiencing opportunities for growth

Power Within Organizational Structures

Kanter's Theory of Structural Empowerment (1993)

- What leaders can do:
    - Demonstrate transparency
    - Encourage peer and supervisor feedback
    - Provide adequate time to carry out work

- In care settings, the very same positive organizational structures yield higher job satisfaction, decreased burnout, and demonstrate organizational trust in nurses (Laschinger, 2008,; Lashinger et al., 2012)

Power Within Organizational Structures

- Structural empowerment , authentic leadership, and a professional nursing environment are all contributors to interprofessional collaboration (IPC) (Regan, Laschinger, & Wong, 2015)

- Nurse leaders have the ability to enhance confidence by role-modelling collaboration within the organizational structure

Power Within Organizational Structures

- In a truly collaborative environment authentic nurse leaders empower others by demonstrating
  - Transparency
  - Openness
  - Their code of ethics
  - Self-awareness (Regan, Laschinger, & Wong, 2015)
  - Emotional intelligence
  - Empathy with individual nurses (Bawafaa, Wong, & Laschinger, 2005)

Power Within Organizational Structures

Spreitzer's (1995) concept of Psychological Empowerment

A psychological state employees must experience for empowerment by leaders to successfully occur; their capacity for empowerment

Meaning

- The value of a work goal or purpose in relation to one's own standards
- Meaning involves a fit between the requirements of a work role and values, beliefs and behaviours

Competence

- The individual's belief in his or her capacity to perform activities with skill
- Leaders who reinforce a sense of competence improve staff engagement

Self-determination

- An individual's sense of having choice in initiating and regulating actions
- It is essential for leaders to understand the impact of knowledge-transfer and rewards, as they promote individuals' self-esteem and internal locus of control

Impact

- The degree to which and individual can influence outcomes at work
- The opposite of learned helplessness (Martinko & Gardner, 1982)

Power Within Organizational Structures

- Without leaders stimulating nurses to act independently, the value of perceived integrity from nurses to leaders is essentially insignificant (Smothers, Doleh, Celuch, Peluchette, & Valadares, 2016)

- The quality of the relationship between unit leaders and staff nurses is crucial is establishing empowering workplaces
  - Strong, positive relationships promote the commitment of nurses to their work and their growing sense of psychological empowerment (Laschinger, Finegan, & Wilk, 2009)

4. Empowerment and Care in Mental Health Nursing

Empowerment and Care in Mental Health Nursing
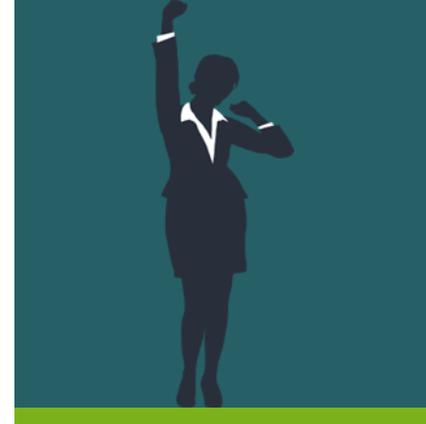
- Engström, Westerberg Jacobson, and Mårtensson (2015) explored how structural empowerment is experienced by mental health
  - Access to opportunities and resources
- Strategies recommended in mental health work settings
  - regularly meeting with nursing staff to discuss individual nursing education or career plans
  - providing adequate time for clinical reflection
- Administration may see benefit from investing this same quality of time or more in front line managers as empowered managers are better able to empower staff

Empowerment and Care in Mental Health Nursing

- Administration may see benefit from investing this same quality of time or more in front line managers as empowered managers are better able to empower staff

- Interestingly, Engström et al. (2015) found an outcome of structural empowerment is an increase in evidence-based practice in mental health nursing!

Empowerment and Care in Mental Health Nursing

- Nurses working in acute inpatient mental health settings apply the principles of person-centred, strengths-based, and recovery focused care in the daily interactions with their patients

- In order for mental health nurses to effectively provide this type of care to their patients, they must also experience these principles for themselves (Clossey & Rowlett, 2008; McCormack, Dewing, & McCance, 2011)

Empowerment and Care in Mental Health Nursing

- A perceived lack of empowerment may result in feelings of failure and frustration, in turn resulting in substandard patient care and poorer outcomes (Laschinger & Havens, 1996)

- Nurses who feel empowered by leadership are positively influenced in their practice, providing high quality patient care and generate better patient outcomes (Greco et al., 2006; Laschinger et al., 2009)

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES,

WHICH EMPHASIZE STAFF EMPOWERMENT, RECIPROCAL RESPECT, AND MUTUAL APPRECIATION,
PARALLEL THE PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF PERSON-CENTRED CARE

BECKETT ET AL., 2013. P. 596

Empowerment and Care in Mental Health Nursing

- Transformational leadership:
  - Concerned with the development of empowered teams
  - Highly congruent with mental health nursing values (Beckett et al., 2013)

- Organisational cultures that support ongoing improvements in the workplace are characterised by shared values, a commitment to lifelong learning, collaboration, and transformational leadership (Manley, 2000)

Empowerment and Care in Mental Health Nursing

- Implementation of transformational leadership has been found to have a positive impact on
  - team performance, patient care, staff satisfaction and well-being, and culture change in mental health in-patient environments (Beckett et al., 2013; Corrigan, Lickey, Campion, & Rashid, 2000)
    - Contributes to staff empowerment
    - May lead to nursing team cohesion and a greater commitment to patient-centered, recovery-focused care

5. Conclusions

Conclusions

- While empowerment in nursing has been widely discussed in the literature, there is relatively little specific to empowering mental health nurses

- The consequences of failing to foster nurse empowerment is well-documented

Conclusions

- Nurses who are not intimidated by the power associated with empowerment can mobilize and influence nursing practices associated with patient care (Rao, 2012)

Conclusions

- Mental health nurses empowered through the use of transformational leadership are better enabled to provide quality care to their patients, as such leaders use a model that duplicates the philosophical underpinnings of the practices many nurses wish to achieve

- Nurse leaders have the ability to empower nurses and create a supportive environment to enhance nurses commitment to quality patient care

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Questions?